

Message Text

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ACTION MMO-02

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FM AMEMBASSY OSLO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5608

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 OSLO 1733

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FOR M/MO

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS:MODE, NO
SUBJECT: MODE REVIEW-AGRICULTURAL ASSISTANT POSITION

REF: OSLO 0551

1. WE HAVE DISCUSSED ABOLITION OF THE EMBASSY'S AGRICULTURAL ASSISTANT POSITION WITH THE INSPECTION TEAM IN THE COURSE OF THEIR RECENT REVIEW OF EMBASSY OSLO. BASED ON THEIR DISCUSSION WITH US--AND WITH THE AGRICULTURAL ATTACHE WHO VISITED OSLO DURING THE INSPECTION--THE INSPECTORS PROPOSED THAT WE ELABORATE ON OUR RECOMMENDATION, SPELLING OUT PRECISELY WHICH ASPECTS OF THE POSITION WE WOULD RETAIN AND WHERE THESE WOULD BE ABSORBED BY OTHER ECON/COMM SECTION STAFF.

2. WE HAVE BEGUN THIS PROCESS BY DOING AN INTENSIVE ANALYSIS OF THE JOB DESCRIPTION OF THE AGRICULTURAL ASSISTANT. THIS JOB DESCRIPTION WAS PROVIDED TO US BY THE AGRICULTURAL ATTACHE IN COPENHAGEN. IT SHOWS THAT THE AGRICULTURAL ASSISTANT'S WORK FALLS INTO THREE MAJOR CATEGORIES. FIRST HE IS "RESPONSIBLE FOR THE GENERAL ADMINISTRATION AND CONTINUING FUNCTIONS OF THE AGRICULTURAL OFFICE OF THE AMERICAN EMBASSY IN OSLO."

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THIS INCLUDES ARRANGING SCHEDULES FOR VARIOUS OFFICIAL VISITORS, ANSWERING CORRESPONDENCE, AND ASSISTING NORWEGIAN OFFICIALS AND TRADE REPRESENTATIVES. THE SECOND MAJOR ASPECT OF HIS WORK, ACCORDING TO THE AGRICULTURAL ATTACHE, IS REPORTING "ALL IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, TRADE AND POLICY DEVELOPMENTS IN NORWAY THAT AFFECT US INTERESTS." THE THIRD MAJOR CATEGORY OF THE AGASSISTANT'S JOB IS MARKET DE-

VELOPMENT AND PROMOTION OF US AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS. ACCORDING TO THE AGRICULTURAL ATTACHE'S OWN FIGURES, THE AGRICULTURAL ASSISTANT'S TIME IS BROKEN DOWN ROUGHLY AS FOLLOWS: REPORTING -40 PERCENT; MARKET DEVELOPMENT -29 PERCENT; SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATION-25 PERCENT. WE BELIEVE THAT THE PROPOSALS WE HAVE OUTLINED BELOW WOULD ALLOW US TO SUBSTANTIALLY ABSORB THOSE ASPECTS OF THE AGRICULTURAL ASSISTANT'S JOB WHICH ARE IMPORTANT TO US INTERESTS IN NORWAY WITHOUT SUFFERING AN UNACCEPTABLE LOSS OF PERFORMANCE FOR THE AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT HERE.

3. OF THE AGRICULTURAL ASSISTANT'S FUNCTIONS, THE MOST IMPORTANT FOR US INTERESTS, IS MARKET PROMOTION WITH OVER \$100 MILLION IN AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS TO NORWAY IN 1977. WE FULLY RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING AND HOPEFULLY EXPANDING OUR MARKET HERE. WE INTEND, THEREFORE, AFTER ABOLISHING THE AGRICULTURAL ASSISTANT SLOT, TO CONTINUE GIVING HIGH PRIORITY TO THIS ASPECT OF HIS WORK BY FULLY INTEGRATING THE AGRICULTURAL PROMOTION ACTIVITIES INTO OUR ACTIVE COMMERCIAL PROGRAMS.

4. ACCORDING TO THE AGRICULTURAL ATTACHE'S "INVENTORY OF PERSONNEL RESOURCE USE" SUBMITTED TO THE FAS IN WASHINGTON ON NOVEMBER 1, 1977 OUR AGRICULTURAL ASSISTANT SPEND ABOUT 29 PERCENT OF HIS TIME ON MARKET DEVELOPMENT. UNDER OUR PROPOSAL THIS PROMOTIONAL WORK WOULD BE EXPLICITLY INTEGRATED

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INTO THE EMBASSY'S COUNTRY COMMERCIAL PROGRAM, TO BE PERFORMED LARGELY BY ONE OF THE TWO COMMERCIAL LOCAL EMPLOYEES UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE COMMERCIAL ATTACHE. WE WOULD INCLUDE AGRICULTURAL PROMOTION AS ONE OF OUR SPECIAL POST EFFORTS IN THE CCP. THE AGRICULTURAL ATTACHE'S FUNCTION WOULD PRIMARILY BE ADVISORY. THE EXISTING COMMERCIAL STAFF WOULD

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 OSLO 1733

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FOR M/MO

BE FREED TO HANDLE THESE ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES BY CONTRACTING OUR WTDR'S (A PROCESS WE HAVE ALREADY BEGUN) BY ADDITIONAL USE OF THE EMBASSY'S WORD PROCESSING CENTER AND, IF REQUIRED, BY TRANSFERRING SOME RESPONSIBILITIES FOR RESPONDING TO PUBLIC INQUIRIES ON COMMERCIAL MATTERS TO THE STAFF OF THE JOINT EMBASSY REFERENCE CENTER, OF WHICH THE COMMERCIAL LIBRARY IS NOW A PART.

5. FORTH PERCENT OF THE AGRICULTURAL ASSISTANT'S TIME, ACCORDING TO THE FAS INVENTORY, IS NOW SPENT ON ANALYSIS AND PREPARING REQUIRED REPORTS. IT IS OUR VIEW THAT MUCH OF THIS TIME WASTED. MANY OF THE REPORTS INVOLVE NO ANALYSIS WHATSOEVER, BUT MERELY THE UPDATING OF THE PREVIOUS YEAR'S FIGURES. IN THESE CASES, WE BELIEVE THAT WASHINGTON'S END-USERS' REAL NEEDS COULD BE SUBSTANTIALLY MET BY SUBMISSION OF TRADE ASSOCIATION ANNUAL REPORTS OR ABSTRACTS FROM THE NORWEGIAN CENTRAL STATISTICS BUREAU DIRECTLY TO THE AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT IN WASHINGTON. RESPONSIBILITY FOR GETTING DATA AND CONCLUSIONS INTO THE REQUIRED FAS FORMAT COULD AND SHOULD BE THAT OF SOMEONE IN WASHINGTON. OTHER REPORTS SUCH AS THE APPLES AND PEARS REPORT, FRUIT REPORT AND TOBACCO REPORT STRIKE US AS ENTIRELY UNNECESSARY. WE HAVE ALREADY
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QUESTIONED THE NECESSITY FOR CONTINUING THEM.

6. WE WOULD AGREE ON A CONTINUING NEED FOR THE ANNUAL "AGRICULTURAL SITUATION REPORT" WHICH WE PROPOSE TO HAVE PREPARED BY THE E/C SECTION'S ECONOMIC SPECIALIST WHO HAS AN ANALYTICAL BACKGROUND AND WHO IS ALREADY DOING MOST OF OUR CERP REQUIREMENTS. THE ADDITIONAL AGRICULTURAL WORKLOAD WOULD OFFSET REDUCTIONS WE HAVE ALREADY PROPOSED IN OUR CERP REPORTING (MAINLY THROUGH SUBMISSIONS DIRECTLY TO WASHINGTON AND USE OF ASSOCIATION REPORTS, ETC. IN PLACE OF EMBASSY SUMMATIONS OF DEVELOPMENTS).

7. IN SUM, WE SEE NO REASON WHY THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRUCULTURE, LIKE OTHER US AGENCIES, SHOULD NOT BE ABLE TO REDUCE ITS DEMANDS FOR EMBASSY REPORTING TO A LEVEL MORE CONSISTENT

WITH OUR LEGITIMATE INTERESTS HERE.

8. THE 10 PERCENT OF THE AGRICULTURAL ASSISTANT'S TIME SPENT ON A VARIETY OF DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE SERVICES (MOSTLY LOOKING AFTER VISITORS) WE PROPOSE TO HANDLE IN THE COMMERCIAL SECTION USING RESOURCES MADE AVAILABLE AS NOTED IN PARA 2. THE 15 PERCENT OF HIS JOB CURRENTLY DEVOTED TO ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS, LEAVE AND OTHER DROPS OUT IF THE JOB IS ABOLISHED.

9. IN VIEW OF OUR ASSESSMENT THAT THE AGRICULTURAL ASSISTANT'S POSITION CAN BE HANDLED USING FOR THE MOST PART EXISTING EMBASSY RESOURCES, WE STAND BY OUR RECOMMENDATION THAT THE POSITION BE ABOLISHED. WE PROPOSE TO EFFECT THE ABOLITION BY ATTRITION, PROBABLY WITHIN THE NEXT 18-24 MONTHS.
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